

ANCIENT SKIES

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Official Logbook of the Ancient Astronaut Society

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EVIDENCE OF TECHNOLOGY IN MAYALAND

BY GENE M. PHILLIPS, Founder of the Society

Archaeologists have a penchant for describing all their findings in terms of religion, sex or the providing of food. Hence, all buildings of antiquity are "temples"; the personages depicted on stone stelae are "priests" or "gods"; and all other stone objects are "altars", whether round or flat or shaped like a turtle. Accordingly, the activity depicted in stone relief is variously described as being religious in nature, or strange sexual behavior, or, if neither of the foregoing can be fitted into the scene, we have native women carrying baskets of food on their heads or the Maize God planting corn.

It is truly amazing that the only structures that have survived over the centuries are places of worship and the habitats of the religious. The explanation is, of course, that only such buildings were constructed of long-lasting stone; everyone else lived in thatch huts and all the daily activity was carried on out-of-doors.

Because archaeology has constricted itself into the narrow parameters above-discussed, everything which is discovered must fit into the same narrow confines. The highway system of the Yucatan in Mexico is described as "causeways" and if used for transportation at all, was travelled by natives on foot. There were no wheeled vehicles for transportation because, we are taught, the ancients of Mexico and Central America had not developed the use of the wheel. Then, when a small figure of an animal with four small wheels in place of feet was unearthed in the Aztec world, the archaeologists made a quick adjustment and stated that the ancients knew the concept of the wheel, but did not adapt it for transportation - only for toys.

Thus we have a civilization which built hundreds of miles of elevated, paved "highways" - the "causeway" between Uxmal and Kabah in the Yucatan is 15 feet wide and extends for 10 miles, and the longest one found to date links Cobá with Yaxuná, a distance of 62 miles - all just waiting for someone to invent the wheel. At least we developed the wheel first and then built the highways.

But until a stone cart with two large, spoked intact wheels attached to each end of a stone "axle" is unearthed in Mayaland, we will continue to be taught that the Mayans were incapable of taking the giant step from a four-wheeled toy to a two-wheeled cart, notwithstanding the fact that they produced many perfectly round stone "altars", some with holes in the center where an axle would fit, if they had known the "axle." Maybe that is the key - they knew the wheel, but they were never able to comprehend the axle! Too bad, because they already had the roads for them.

Now, obviously, if the Maya did not know the use of the wheel, they certainly could not have known about "gears", or "cog-wheels", even though they were able to perfectly represent these modern inventions in their stone carvings. Therefore, anything that we find in Mayaland which looks like a gear, however perfectly, must be something else. On our Member Expedition to Copan, we saw three-dimensional stone representations of gears. See *Ancient Skies* 6:2. When we visited Chichén Itzá in northern Yucatan, we saw gears represented in bas relief on the facade of the Iglesia ("church" or "temple" in Spanish) in the old section of the site. Clearly represented are two sets of meshing gears, each set with a larger idle wheel and two smaller meshing gears. The small gears are complete with "cogs" or "teeth" and a round hole in the center. See Figure 1. Also compare the gears in Figure 1 with the illustration in Figure 2, which represents the working of an idle wheel with two smaller gears. The similarity is uncanny.

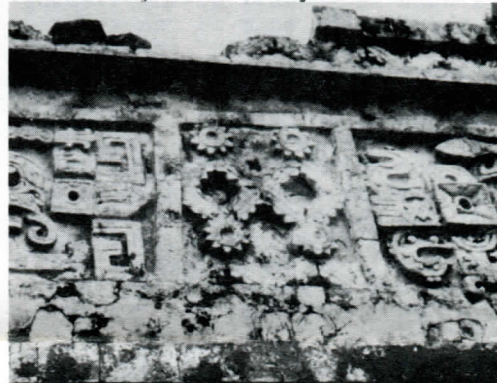


Figure 1. Meshing stone gears on Mayan building at Chichén Itzá

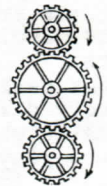


Figure 2. Illustration of meshing gears in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1953 Edition

Yet, when we visited the site, our guide shook his head when we said the figures looked like gears. "No," he said, "the two larger figures represent the Sun and the Moon and the smaller ones are stars. You can see the rays." We know that the Mayans had achieved a very high degree of knowledge in astronomy so it would seem that they could have depicted the heavenly bodies more graphically, if that is really what they were.

But you do not have to be an ancient astronaut to come to the same conclusion we did. The famous novelist, John D. MacDonald, in the last story written before his death, described his visit to Chichén Itzá. See *Chicago Tribune*, December 13, 1987. The author viewed the same bas relief described above and concluded that it represented meshing large and small cog-wheels. In a dialogue with an anthropologist who was in his party, MacDonald asked:

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"If they never had the wheel, what's that?"

"Oh, that depicts the Sun."

"With short square rays?"

"That's similar to many other carvings all over the Mayan areas."

"Oh. What's the little one?"

"Well," the learned-one answered, "some believe that the two of them are pictures in stone of flowers in bloom."

"With little square petals?"

"Yes, of course. If those are the flowers, then those are the petals."

"Nobody has ever said they might be cog wheels?"

"Never. That's nonsense," answered the learned anthropologist.

Thus, it does not matter how many lay persons suggest that the relief in stone represents meshing cog wheels, the official dogmatic answer is that it does not. Fortunately to his credit, our guide did not come up with the ridiculous "flower and petals" story.

Across the road in the "new" section of Chichén Itzá can be found some of the most exciting structures in Mayaland. Attributed to the Toltecs, who swooped down from Tula near Mexico City centuries ago and conquered the Mayas of Yucatan, the near-perfect El Castillo is one of the most beautiful pyramidal structures in the world. Nearby are the famous Temple of the Warriors and the Court of a Thousand Columns.

The "ball court" at Chichén Itzá, or "gymnasium" as one archaeologist described it, is unlike any other ball court in MesoAmerica. The typical ball court, such as the one at Copan, is relatively small with a narrow playing field, enclosed on two sides by very gradual upwards sloping stone inclines, with low vertical walls at the back where the stone ring "goals" are affixed. Presumably the players used their hips to push a hard latex ball up the sloping sides and hopefully through the hole in the stone ring. There are many such "ball courts" throughout Mayaland, including several unrestored ones at Chichén Itzá.

But the restored structure at Chichén Itzá is completely different. It has two parallel vertical stone walls which run for 450 feet in length! They enclose a playing field large enough to play soccer or American football. The sides do not have the low gradual inclines typical of other courts, but the lower five feet of each wall is only slightly inclined. The walls rise over 20 feet in height and set into the center of each wall near the top is a rather large stone "goal" with a hole through which the ball is to pass.

Figure 3 shows the interior face of one of the walls of the ball court at Chichén Itzá with the stone ring near the top. Also shown is the very slightly inclined lower portion of the wall. The people shown in Figure 3 are looking at the low relief carved into the stone blocks which make up the lower sloping portion of the wall. See Figure 4.

The archaeologists' explanation for what is represented in Figure 4 is typical. Since they have determined that the structure is a ball court, then the personages represented must be ball players. Shown are two members of the winning team, carrying the severed head of one of the losers. Supposedly the relief depicts the type of clothing worn by the players.

But if we look at Figure 4 with today's space-age technology in mind, it is not difficult to see two astronauts (or cosmonauts), dressed in pressurized suits, wearing weighted shoes, special headgear and ear phones, and carrying their equipment boxes attached to cables to be plugged into their space capsule. With this interpretation, the "ball court" becomes a lift-off site, and the stone goals become

rings to attach the mooring cables to steady the craft in position. Far-fetched? Perhaps, but we do not suppose that the Mayan craftsmen depicted actual astronauts and space centers, but symbolic ones, based upon something they saw, or upon legends handed down by word-of-mouth from one generation to another.

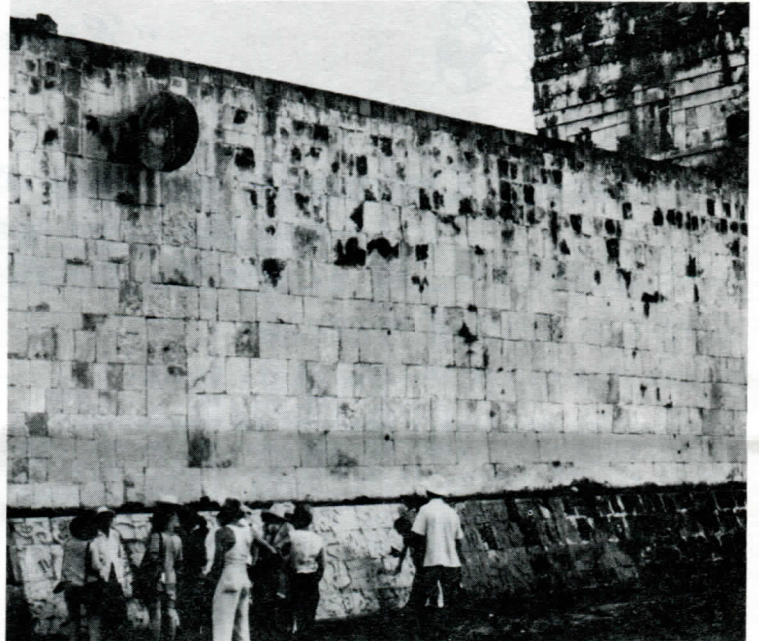


Figure 3. Inside of one wall of the ball court at Chichén Itzá. The people are looking at the relief shown in Figure 4 below.



Figure 4. Low relief carved in stone blocks set in base of wall of ball court at Chichén Itzá.

Across the large "parade ground" from El Castillo at Chichén Itzá is a low stone platform called the Venus Platform, because there are bas reliefs on the platform's edge which represent the Venus symbol. But also on the outer edges of the Venus Platform are two reliefs which seem to have no place in Mayaland. See Figures 5 and 6.

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Figure 5 at left shows portion of relief found on edge of platform of Venus Platform at Chichén Itzá.

Figure 6 below is another relief on the Venus Platform, this one is still intact.

Figure 7 at right is a life-size head sculpted in stone found on the grounds of the Observatory at Chichén Itzá.

amazing height of 229 feet! When our Member Expedition visited Tikal, we were duly impressed with the beautiful and architecturally unique stone buildings, but we were particularly excited over one lone stela, now housed in the small museum at Tikal at the edge of the airstrip. See Figure 8.



Figure 8. Life-size stela depicting elaborately clothed person with obvious breathing apparatus with flexible tube and canister.

The stela is remarkably preserved in all its detail, having been buried in the ground and when found, it was cleaned and moved indoors to escape the ravages of wind and rain. Unfortunately the top of the stela has been broken off and is missing, but enough remains for us to see a personage, elaborately clothed, with heavy shoes, not unlike our "astronauts" of Chichén Itzá's ball court. But there is something uniquely different here - clearly depicted in the stela is a flexible hose originating in the chest area and continuing down and to the side, terminating in a sac or canister.

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While most of the relief of Figure 5 has been destroyed, we can see a clear representation of a helmeted Caucasian person with goggles. This is obviously a companion piece to the relief shown in Figure 6, which shows the entire person. Again we see the same type of face, with goggles and helmet, but we can also see that the person is fully clothed, lying on one side, peering outward and downward as though in a plane or other craft, and holding what appears to be a large gun in his right hand. Certainly the personages represented in Figures 5 and 6 are not Mayan, nor even Toltec, but appear to be European.

One of the most interesting structures in Chichén Itzá is the Observatory, called "El Caracol" (The Snail) by the Spaniards. This small, round, domed building has a circular stairway in the center of the inside leading up to the observation room. Even the archaeologists cannot deny that this building was probably used for astronomical purposes.

On the ground surrounding the Observatory are several stone heads, each with a concave depression in the top of the head, which supposedly were filled with oil and lighted to provide illumination at night. See Figure 7. But the interesting part about the head shown in Figure 7 is that it definitely is not Indian. Note the sharp chin, thin lips, straight nose, deep-set eyes with straight lids and a forehead with a straight brow. Also note the unusual head-dress or helmet.

About 200 miles south of Chichén Itzá lies Tikal, one of the largest of the Mayan ceremonial centers, as the archaeologists call them. With its five huge pyramidal structures, all called Temples by the so-called "experts", Tikal covers the incredibly large area of 220 square miles! Temple IV at Tikal is the highest structure of MesoAmerica, rising to the

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Figure 9 below is a close-up photo of a portion of the Tikal stela clearly showing the detail of the flexible tube and canister.



There has never been any question in my mind that a flexible hose or tube was represented on the stela, but I was convinced of it when I saw the illustration in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1953 Edition, shown in Figure 10 at right.

The illustration shows a gas mask with a flexible hose or tube connecting with a canister. The exact same design used by the ancient sculptor on the Tikal stela has been used by today's artist to illustrate the flexible hose of a gas mask. We must assume therefore, that the sculptor intended to show a personage with some sort of breathing apparatus which utilized a flexible hose connected to a canister filled with materials to absorb, filter, or detoxify poisons and irritants in the air. Either the atmosphere was polluted, or the person depicted came from an environment which contained different air gases and needed a filtering device to breathe in Earth's atmosphere.

I am not aware of an "official" interpretation of the Tikal stela, but if there is one, I am sure it will be different from the one I have described. All photos used in the foregoing article were taken by Gene M. Phillips.



Figure 10.

ERICH VON DANIKEN recently completed a successful lecture tour to Hungary where he presented his theories to enthusiastic audiences totalling several thousand. In 1987 von Daniken was honored with two prestigious awards. One was from the country of Brazil, which awarded him the gold and platinum "Premio Lourenço Filho" Medal. Filho was one of Brazil's great educators. The other, West Germany's Degree of "Knights of Cordon Bleu du Saint Esprit," was bestowed upon von Daniken along with Ulf Merbold, the German astronaut. The Degree is normally awarded to illustrious persons in NATO, Defense Ministers and high-ranking military personnel. Von Daniken is the youngest person ever to receive the coveted Degree. Mr. von Daniken will be one of the principal speakers at the Society's 1989 World Conference in Chicago.

MARS FACE RESEARCH TEAM TO PRESENT EVIDENCE AT SOCIETY'S 1989 WORLD CONFERENCE

Vincent DiPietro and Gregory Molenaar will present a slide lecture on their research and findings on the Mars Face at the Ancient Astronaut Society's 16th Anniversary World Conference to be held in the Chicago area on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 25, 26 and 27, 1989. (PLEASE NOTE: the dates listed in Ancient Skies 15:2 were wrong.) A complete list of speakers will be available soon.

DiPietro and Molenaar are co-authors with Dr. John Brandenburg of Unusual Mars Surface Features, the Fourth Edition of which is available from Mars Research, P.O. Box 284, Glenn Dale, Maryland 20769 USA at US\$15 in the U.S. and US\$21 elsewhere.

Arrangements are completed and reservations are being accepted for the Conference to be held at the Schaumburg Marriott Hotel near Chicago. Admission to the three-day Conference is US\$15 per day for members, and US\$20 per day for non-members.

The price for the Gala Banquet to be held on Saturday evening, August 26 is US\$35 per person, with a choice of entrees of strip steak, salmon or chicken breast. Dress at the Banquet is optional.

The special hotel room rate for persons attending the Conference is US\$59 per room, per night, plus tax. Up to five persons may occupy a room for the same low rate per night. The reduced room rates apply for four nights, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Hotel reservation cards are available from the Society office.

UNITED AIRLINES has been designated as the Official Air Carrier for the 1989 World Conference and persons attending the Conference within the United States and Canada who fly to the Conference on United will be entitled to a special discounted air fare. They must fly to Chicago on Thursday, August 24 and depart on Sunday August 27 or Monday August 28. Persons in the U.S. may call toll free to Judy Gibbs, Trans World Travel, Inc., Highland Park, Illinois 800-323-8158 for air schedules, rates and ticketing. Persons in Canada may call (312) 432-2400, but this will be a toll call.

MEMBER EXPEDITION TO CHINA AND TIBET

There is still time to sign up for the Society's Member Expedition to China and Tibet which departs Chicago on April 19, 1989. The price for the entire China Tour is only US\$2,995 per person double occupancy, which includes round trip air fare from Chicago, air fare within China, all hotels, ground transportation, entrance fees and most meals. The China Tour returns to the U.S. on May 3, 1989.

Members outside the U.S., Canada and Mexico who wish to join the China Tour will meet the group in Shanghai on August 20, 1989, after arranging their own air transportation to and from China. Their price for the China Tour only is US\$2,050 per person double occupancy.

Persons on the China Tour may take an optional extension to Tibet which leaves Xi'an on May 1 and departs from Hong Kong on May 11, 1989. The price for the Tibet extension is US\$ 1,195 per person double occupancy, which is all inclusive.

Very low add-on air fares are available for connecting flights to Chicago from cities served by Northwest Airlines. Information on the low add-on fares and a detailed Trip Brochure are available from the Society Office.

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